

**CALIFORNIA REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD  
CENTRAL COAST REGION**

895 Aerovista Place, Suite 101  
San Luis Obispo, California 93401-7906

**NOTICE OF INTENT TO USE FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT IN LIEU  
OF A NEGATIVE DECLARATION FOR  
THE SANTA MARIA RIVER LEVEE REPAIR/IMPROVEMENT PROJECT**

In lieu of preparing its own Negative Declaration, the California Water Quality Control Board, Central Coast Region, acting as lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), intends to use the Environmental Assessment (EA)/Finding of No Significant Impacts (FONSI), prepared by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District (Corps), for a project to repair the existing levees along the Santa Maria River. The proposed project is extending from the terminus of Bradley Canyon to the north end of Blosser Road, located in the city of Santa Maria, Counties of Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo, California.

The proposed Santa Maria River Levee Repair/Improvement Project will repair/improve the existing south levee originally constructed in 1963 by the Corps. The existing levee consists of earthen levees with riprap revetment on the north and south banks of the Santa Maria River. The levee along the south side of the river extends a distance of about 17 miles, from Fugler's Point to California Highway 1 Bridge. The levee along the north side of the river is approximately 5 miles long between the U.S. Highway 101 Bridge and the California Highway 1 Bridge. The levee system was constructed to provide flood protection to the Santa Maria Valley, which includes the city of Santa Maria.

The Corps proposes to apply soil cement along approximately 6.2 miles of the south levee face and levee toe, then transition to sheet pile for the remaining 1,700 feet to the upstream extent of the Project area at Bradley Canyon. The Corps proposes no work on the north levee at this time.

Under CEQA, state agencies are encouraged to use a FONSI prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) rather than preparing a new CEQA document, when the FONSI, prepared before a Negative Declaration or EIR, would otherwise be completed for the project; and the FONSI complies with CEQA Guidelines.

CEQA, Section 15225(a) further states that "where the federal agency circulated the EIS or Finding of No Significant Impact for Public review as broadly as state or local law may require and gave notice meeting the standards in Section 15072(a) or 15087(a), the lead agency under CEQA may use the federal

document in the place of an EIR or Negative Declaration without recirculating the federal document for public review. One review and comment period is enough. Prior to using the federal document in this situation, the lead agency shall give notice that it will use the federal document in the place of an EIR or negative declaration and that it believes that the federal document meets the requirement of CEQA.”

The Corps prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the **Santa Maria River Levee Repair/Improvement Project** to address impacts to environmental resources due to implementation of the proposed levee repair. The Corps distributed the Draft EA/FONSI for a 30-day public review period from April 7, 2009 to May 6, 2009 to all Federal, State, local agencies and concerned public. The Corps also submitted notice of completion to the State Clearing House with 15 copies of the Draft EA/FONSI to be distributed to the State agencies. Copies of the Draft EA were placed at public libraries in Santa Maria, City of Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo City and County. A notice was placed at the public libraries for the availability of the Draft EA/FONSI. A newspaper release was provided to the local newspapers including the Santa Maria Times, San Luis Obispo Tribune, Santa Barbara News-Press, and Santa Barbara Independent. Comments on the Draft EA/FONSI received by the Corps would be incorporated in the Final EA/FONSI. This meets the requirements of a 30-day public review period for an environmental document under CEQA.

This Notice is provided by the California Water Quality Control Board, Central Coast Region (Water Board), lead agency under CEQA, for the Santa Maria Levee Repair/Improvement Project. The Water Board intends to use the EA and FONSI in lieu of preparing its own Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Project. The EA and FONSI include a description of the Proposed Action and evaluate potential for adverse environmental impact. The EA concludes the Proposed Action would have no significant impacts to the environment.

Digital versions of the EA and FONSI will be available at the Water Board website, <http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/rwgcb3/>. Should you have any questions, please contact to Mr. Dominic Roques, by email at [Droques@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:Droques@waterboards.ca.gov) or by mail to:

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